



# BLACK BOLT™

## #4



SALADIN AHMED  
CHRISTIAN WARD

MARVEL





is the king of the Inhumans, an off-splinter of humanity imbued with amazing abilities. But these gifts sometimes come with a price: Black Bolt's slightest whisper can shatter mountains. His voice has destroyed many lives, but it has saved countless others.

When the Silent King speaks, the world hears him.

But now no one can hear him. Black Bolt finds himself trapped in a strange alien prison. His treacherous brother, Maximus the Mad, was meant to be the one imprisoned here, but he used his psychic powers and image-altering technology to send Black Bolt in his place. A deranged, incalculably powerful being known only as the Jailer suppresses the inmates' natural abilities and tortures them until they die—then resurrects them to face their crimes again and again.

Black Bolt and his fellow prisoners—Metal Master, the Absorbing Man, Raava and Blinky—overpowered their guard and regained their powers. They tracked the Jailer to a machine that harnesses the inmates' pain: He's been feeding on them. Together they took out the device, but the creature behind it was more horrible than they could have imagined. Driven to protect his new allies, Black Bolt attacked head-on.

He failed.

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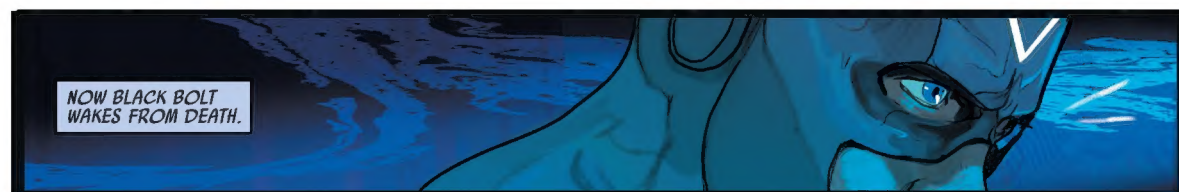
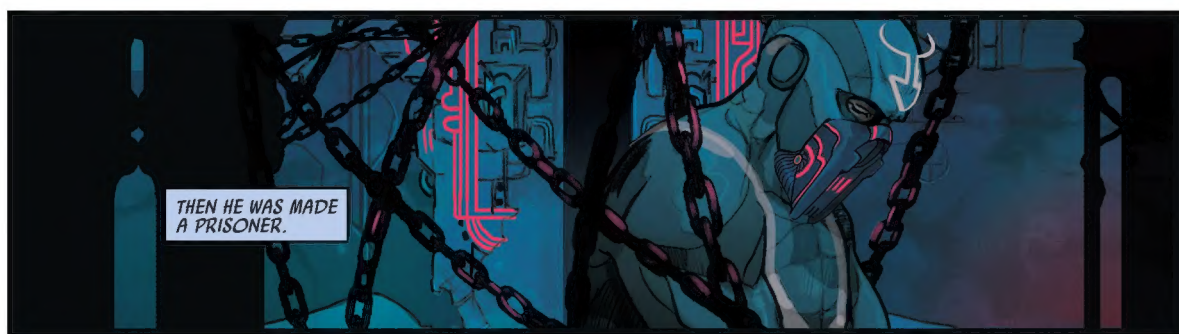
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AND HE  
WONDERS...

WHERE  
THE HELL AM  
I?





WISHBONE!  
THAT YOU? WHAT THE HELL  
HAPPENED?

IT WOULD  
SEEM WE ARE  
PRISONERS  
AGAIN.

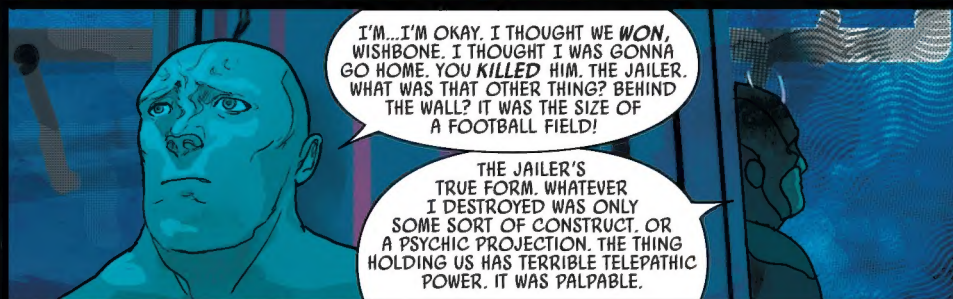


YOU'RE  
TALKIN'.

AYE.  
MY POWERS ARE  
GONE AGAIN. I CAN  
FEEL THEIR ABSENCE.  
*KEENLY.*

YEAH.  
I CAN'T ABSORB  
EITHER. DAMN. YOU  
IN ONE PIECE?

I AM  
UNHARMED. AND  
YOU, CRUSHER  
CREEL?



I'M...I'M OKAY. I THOUGHT WE *WON*,  
WISHBONE. I THOUGHT I WAS GONNA  
GO HOME. YOU *KILLED* HIM. THE JAILER.  
WHAT WAS THAT OTHER THING? BEHIND  
THE WALL? IT WAS THE SIZE OF  
A FOOTBALL FIELD!

THE JAILER'S  
TRUE FORM. WHATEVER  
I DESTROYED WAS ONLY  
SOME SORT OF CONSTRUCT. OR  
A PSYCHIC PROJECTION. THE THING  
HOLDING US HAS TERRIBLE TELEPATHIC  
POWER. IT WAS PALPABLE.



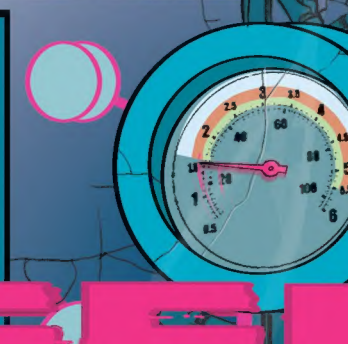
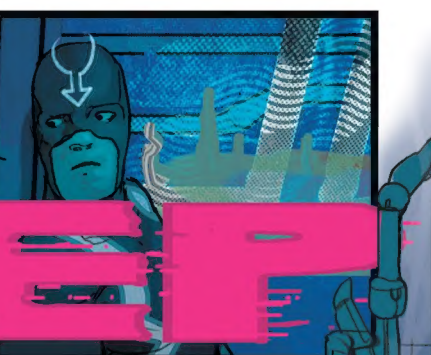
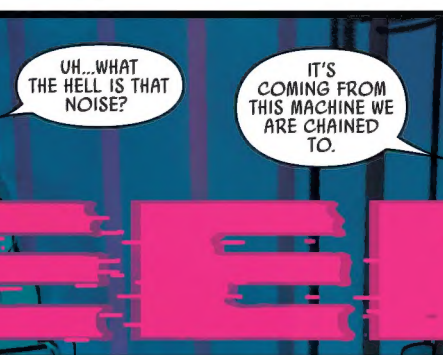
THE SICK  
BASTARD. THIS WHOLE  
THING WAS A GAME FOR  
HIM. HE LET US GET OUT  
JUST TO MESS  
WITH US.

NO. PERHAPS  
THAT'S HOW IT STARTED,  
BUT I DON'T THINK THINGS  
WERE MEANT TO GO SO FAR.  
WHATEVER THAT FOUL THING IN THOSE  
TANKS WAS, IT WAS THE TRUE ESSENCE  
OF THIS CURSED PLACE. WE WERE  
NOT SUPPOSED TO SEE IT. IN THOSE  
LAST MOMENTS I FELT TERRIBLE  
POWER, BUT ALSO...  
*FEAR.*





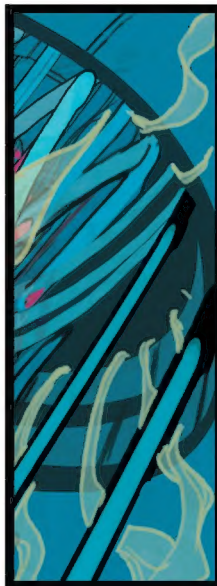
**BEEP**



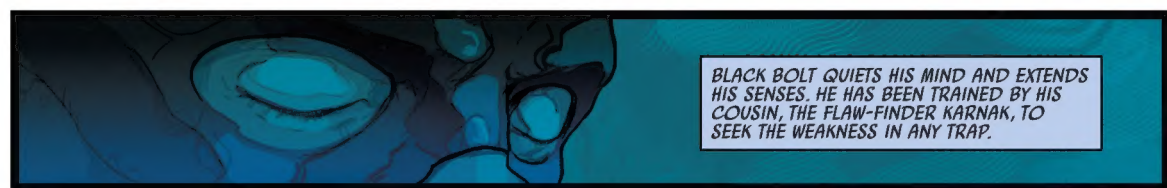
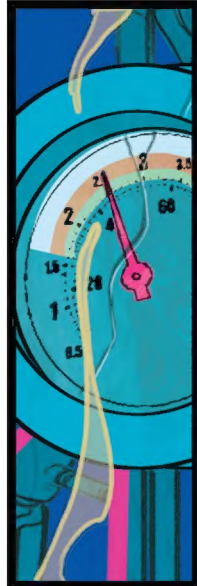




IT'S...IT'S MEASURING THE OXYGEN IN THE CELL. HE'S DRAINING THE AIR OUT.



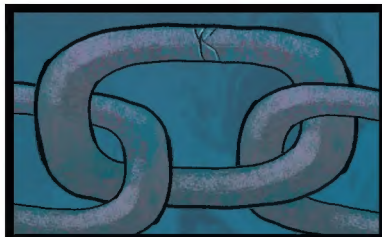
EVERY BREATH WE TAKE, EVERY WORD WE SPEAK, IS COSTING US AIR. SIT STILL AND SILENTLY. BREATHE SHALLOWLY. I WILL FIND A WAY OUT OF HERE.



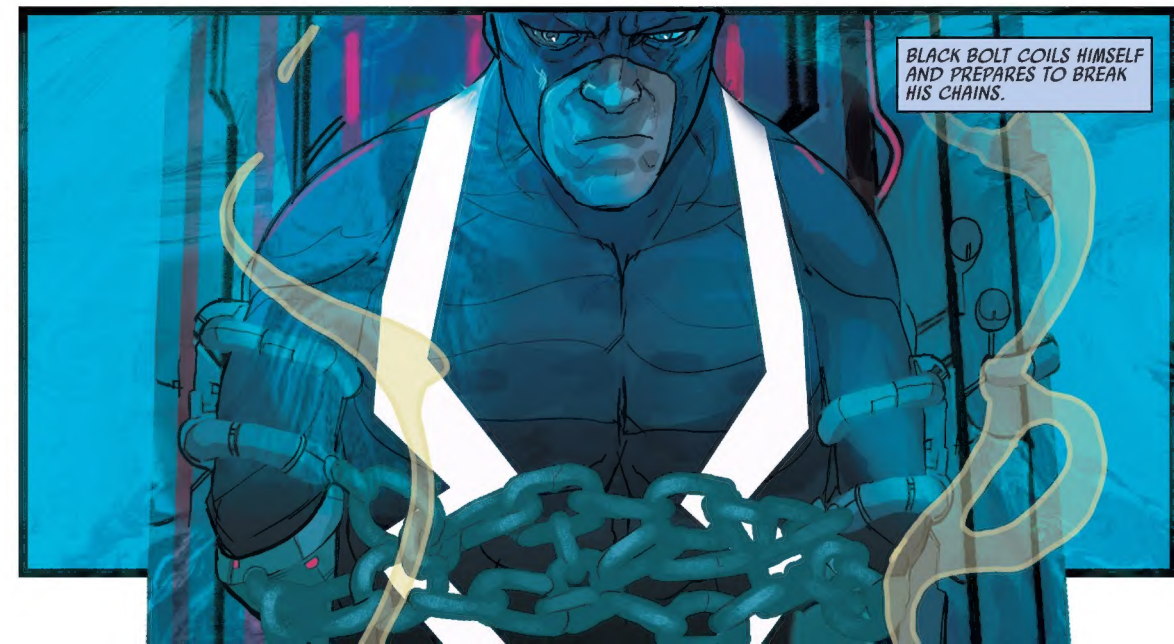
BLACK BOLT QUIETS HIS MIND AND EXTENDS HIS SENSES. HE HAS BEEN TRAINED BY HIS COUSIN, THE FLAW-FINDER KARNAK, TO SEEK THE WEAKNESS IN ANY TRAP.



HE ATTUNES EVERY MUSCLE TO HIS BONDS, SEARCHING FOR A WAY TO BREAK THEM.



AND, FINALLY, HE FEELS THE FLAW.



BLACK BOLT COILS HIMSELF AND PREPARES TO BREAK HIS CHAINS.

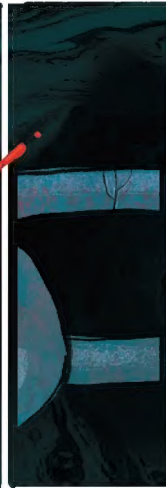
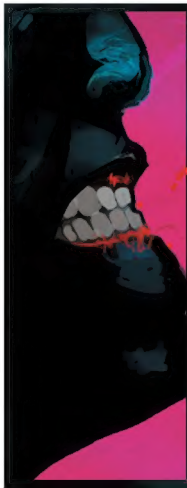
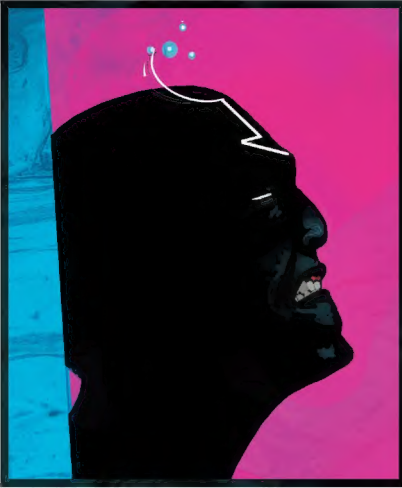




BUT HIS CHAINS  
HOLD FAST.



HE CALLS UPON THE UNFATHOMABLE  
POWER AT HIS COMMAND, HELD IN  
CHECK NOW BY THE JAILER, TRYING  
TO FORCE SOME SMALL TRICKLE  
OF IT THROUGH.

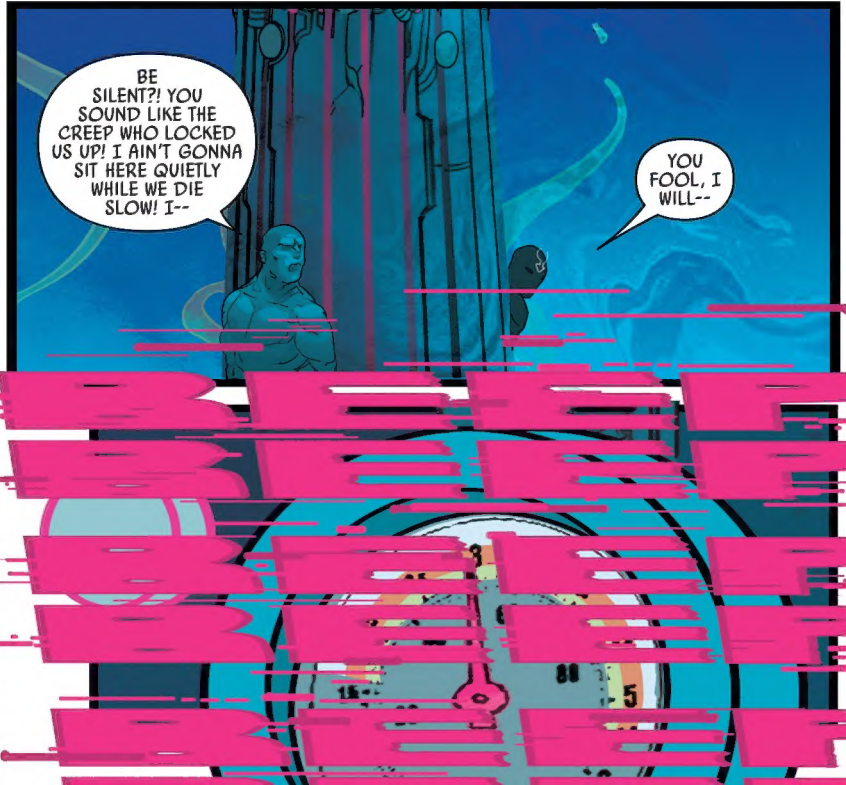


BUT ALL OF IT  
PROVES USELESS.



WHATEVER  
YER DOIN' AIN'T  
WORKING. SEEMS  
LIKE--

BE  
SILENT! YOU  
ARE COSTING US  
OXYGEN.



BE  
SILENT?! YOU  
SOUND LIKE THE  
CREEP WHO LOCKED  
US UP! I AIN'T GONNA  
SIT HERE QUIETLY  
WHILE WE DIE  
SLOW! I--

YOU  
FOOL, I  
WILL--





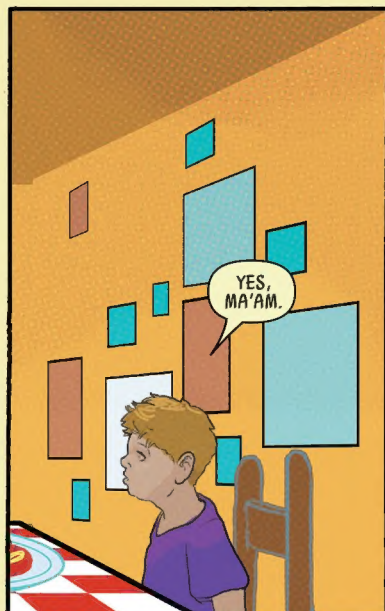




"I WAS JUST SAYIN' THAT MY MA ALWAYS SAID..."



ALWAYS HAVE **EXPECTATIONS** OF YOURSELF, CARL. DON'T YOU SIT THERE SETTLING. YOU'RE A BRIGHT BOY, AND YOU SHOULD **EXPECT** THINGS OF YOURSELF. DO YOU HEAR ME?



YES, MA'AM.



"I TRIED TO DO RIGHT, LIKE MA WANTED. I TRIED TO LIVE HER WAY. BUT EVEN THAT YOUNG, I RAN PRETTY WILD. IT WAS A TOUGH NEIGHBORHOOD. YOU KNOW HOW KIDS ARE."



I...DO NOT. MY POWERS APPEARED WHEN I WAS BUT AN INFANT. I WAS RAISED ALONE IN A SOUNDPROOF SPHERE UNTIL I LEARNED TO CONTROL THEM.



GEEZ, MAN. THAT SOUNDS AWFUL.

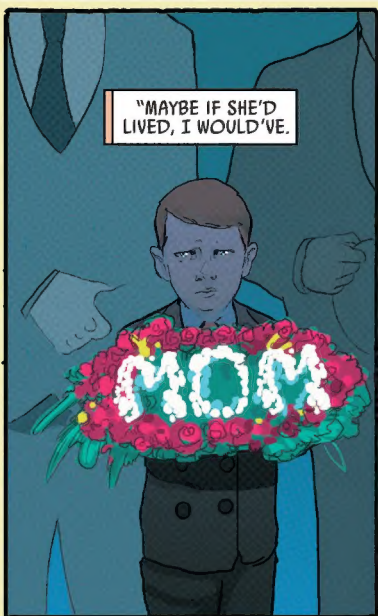
I... I KNEW NOTHING ELSE.

YEAH. I KNOW THAT FEELING.

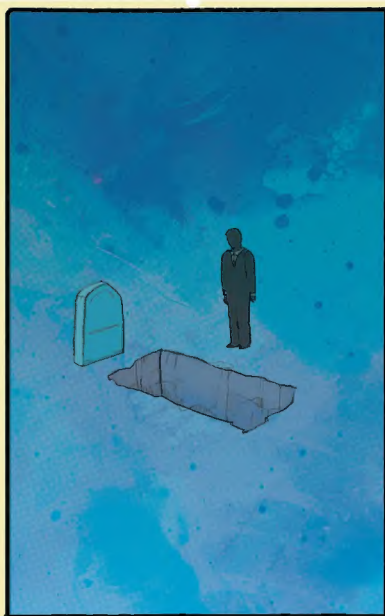


"ANYWAY, I WAS A KNUCKLEHEAD, BUT MA...SHE ALWAYS MADE ME FEEL LIKE I COULD ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING."

"SOMETHING GOOD, I MEAN."



"MAYBE IF SHE'D LIVED, I WOULD'VE."





"IT WAS JUST ME AND MY OLD MAN AFTER THAT. HE SHOULD'VE LET ME GO LIVE WITH MY AUNT BETSY. BUT THEN HE WOULDN'T HAVE HAD ANYBODY TO BOSS AROUND.

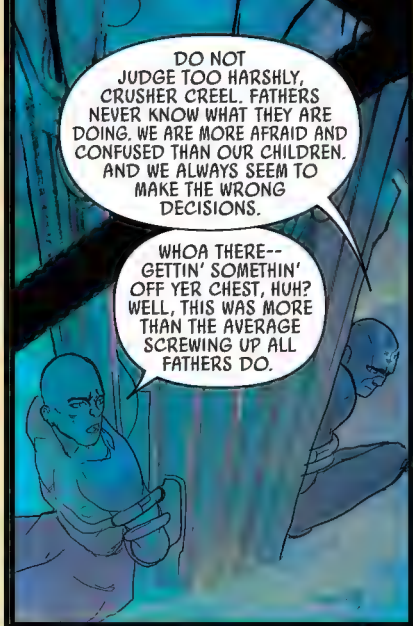


"HE WAS ALWAYS A JERK, EVEN WHEN MA WAS AROUND. BUT AFTER SHE DIED, HE TURNED *MEAN*.



DO NOT JUDGE TOO HARSHLY, CRUSHER CREEL. FATHERS NEVER KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING. WE ARE MORE AFRAID AND CONFUSED THAN OUR CHILDREN. AND WE ALWAYS SEEM TO MAKE THE WRONG DECISIONS.

WHOA THERE-- GETTIN' SOMETHIN' OFF YER CHEST, HUH? WELL, THIS WAS MORE THAN THE AVERAGE SCREWING UP ALL FATHERS DO.



"HE SWUNG ON ME. A LOT.



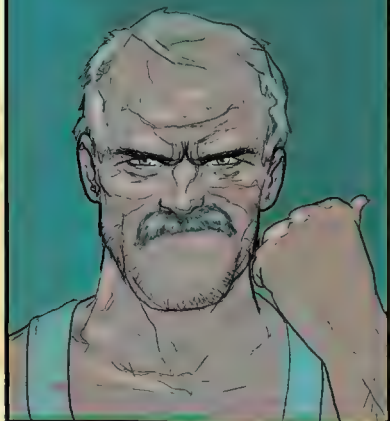
"FOR YEARS I LIVED IN TERROR OF THAT BASTARD.



"WHEN I WAS 16, I FINALLY FOUND THE GRIT TO SWING BACK.

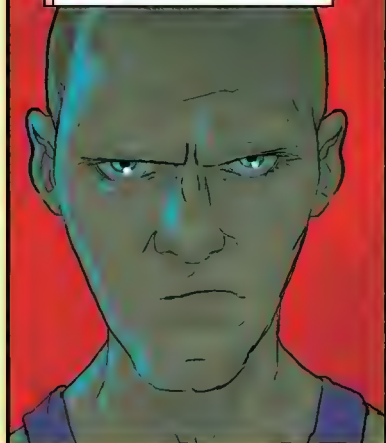


"FOR THE FIRST TIME I REALIZED I COULD TAKE MY OLD MAN. THAT HE COULDN'T LORD OVER ME ANYMORE. HE REALIZED IT, TOO.



"THAT'S WHEN HE THREW ME OUT OF THE HOUSE.

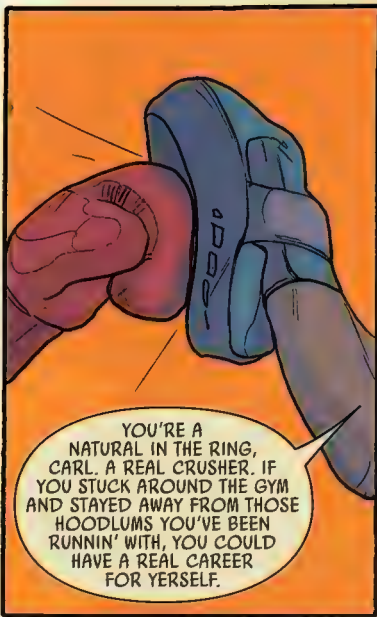
"I LIVED ON THE STREET AND AT THE GYM. MY OLD MAN WAS A BUM AND A BULLY, BUT HE DID TWO GOOD THINGS FOR ME IN LIFE--HE TAUGHT ME ABOUT CARS, AND HE GOT ME BOXING GLOVES.







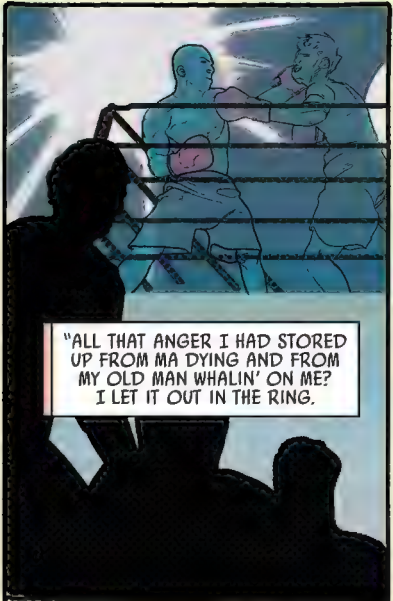
"I NEVER PUT THE GREASE  
MONKEY STUFF TO MUCH  
USE. BUT THE GLOVES..."



YOU'RE A  
NATURAL IN THE RING,  
CARL. A REAL CRUSHER. IF  
YOU STUCK AROUND THE GYM  
AND STAYED AWAY FROM THOSE  
HOODLUMS YOU'VE BEEN  
RUNNIN' WITH, YOU COULD  
HAVE A REAL CAREER  
FOR YERSELF.



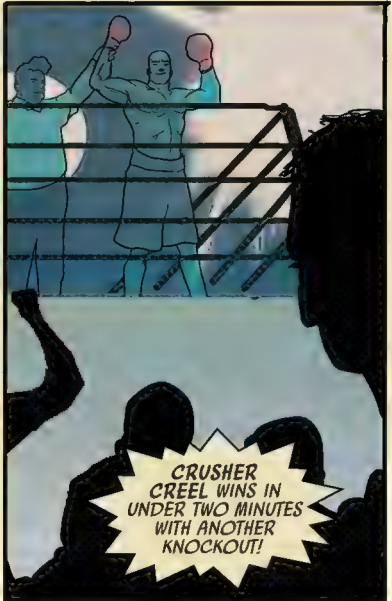
AW,  
OZZIE, LAY  
OFF THAT,  
WILL YA?



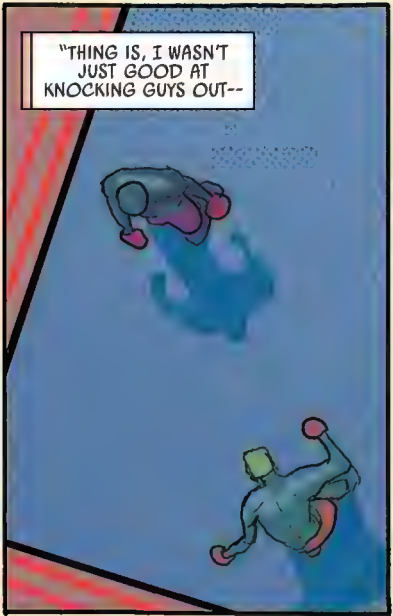
"ALL THAT ANGER I HAD STORED  
UP FROM MA DYING AND FROM  
MY OLD MAN WHALIN' ON ME?  
I LET IT OUT IN THE RING.



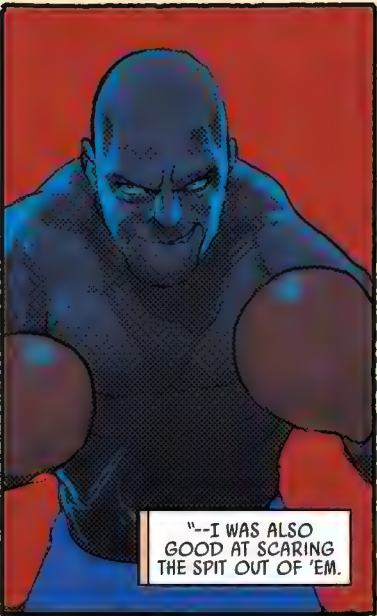
"I GOT REAL GOOD AT  
PUNCHING GUYS OUT. THEY  
STARTED TO CALL ME..."



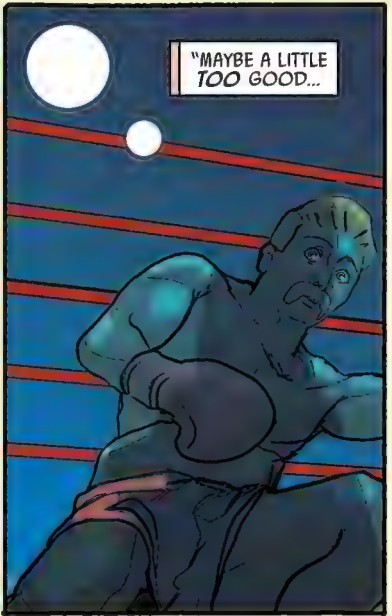
**CRUSHER  
CREEL WINS IN  
UNDER TWO MINUTES  
WITH ANOTHER  
KNOCKOUT!**



"THING IS, I WASN'T  
JUST GOOD AT  
KNOCKING GUYS OUT--



"--I WAS ALSO  
GOOD AT SCARING  
THE SPIT OUT OF 'EM.



"MAYBE A LITTLE  
TOO GOOD..."





"NOW, I WASN'T EXACTLY A BOY SCOUT BEFORE. I DID SOME BRES, BROKE INTO CARS AND STUFF. HALF THE GUYS I KNEW HAD. BUT ONCE THE LOCAL...ELEMENT SAW ME IN THE RING, THEY WANTED ME TO GO PROFESSIONAL."



YOU AIN'T EVEN GOT TO HURT NOBODY, CREEL. JUST SHOW 'EM YER UGLY MUG, KNOCK OVER A COUPLE SHELVES, AND LET 'EM KNOW THAT WHEN THE OWL SAYS IT'S TIME TO PAY UP, HE MEANS IT.

YEAH, OKAY. I CAN DO THAT.



"THEY LIED, OF COURSE. I HAD TO HURT PEOPLE. BUT I WAS USED TO IT. SO WHEN I WASN'T PUNCHING GUYS IN THE RING, I WAS PUNCHIN' 'EM FOR PAY, DOING SHAKEDOWNS FOR THE OWL'S BOYS. THE MONEY WAS GOOD FOR A LITTLE WHILE. THE RESPECT WAS BETTER."



AND DID YOU NOT THINK OF THOSE INNOCENTS YOU HARMED?

YOU KNOW, WISHBONE, I DID THINK ABOUT 'EM. AND I FELT LIKE I WANTED TO STOP. BUT WHEN I TRIED TO STOP, IT FELT BEYOND MY CONTROL. LIKE WHEN YOU'RE DRIVIN' ON ICE AND YOUR BRAKES LOCK UP, Y'KNOW?



YOU DON'T DRIVE, DO YOU?



WE HAVE...FLYING VEHICLES.



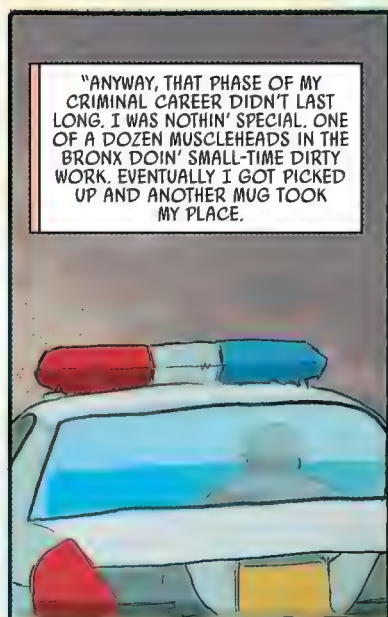
MUST BE NICE. WHADDAYA DO IF YER FLYING VEHICLE IS IN THE SHOP?



I OFTEN TRAVEL WITH MY TELEPORTING DOG.



YOU KNOW WHAT? FORGET I ASKED.



"ANYWAY, THAT PHASE OF MY CRIMINAL CAREER DIDN'T LAST LONG. I WAS NOTHIN' SPECIAL. ONE OF A DOZEN MUSCLEHEADS IN THE BRONX DOIN' SMALL-TIME DIRTY WORK. EVENTUALLY I GOT PICKED UP AND ANOTHER MUG TOOK MY PLACE."





"THEY GOT ME ON AGGRAVATED ASSAULT AND EXTORTION, AND THEY SENT ME UPSTATE."



"THAT FIRST STRETCH IN PRISON--THAT WAS TOUGH. I DIDN'T KNOW HOW THE JOINT WORKED. ALL I SAW WAS GUYS DOING THE MOST HORRIBLE THINGS TO EACH OTHER."



"I THOUGHT I WAS A TOUGH GUY, BUT I CRIED THOSE FIRST COUPLE NIGHTS, I AIN'T ASHAMED TO ADMIT IT."



"I WAS BIG AND I COULD FIGHT. I HAD IT EASIER THAN A LOT OF GUYS IN THERE. BUT I STILL HAD DUES TO PAY."



"I GOT KNOCKED AROUND. GOT MY NOSE BROKEN. BUT EVENTUALLY I LEARNED TO HOLD MY OWN."



"THEN HE SHOWED UP. LOKI. AN ACTUAL NORSE GOD."



"HE GAVE ME A MAGICAL POTION-- STILL SOUNDS GOOFY SAYING THAT ALL THESE YEARS LATER. THE POTION IS WHERE I GOT MY ABSORBING POWERS."



"I DON'T KNOW WHY HE PICKED ME OUT OF ALL THE OTHER MUGS IN THAT PRISON. MAYBE HIM BEING A LUNATIC HAD SOMETHIN' TO DO WITH IT. BUT I WAS SURE AS HELL GLAD HE DID."



"BEFORE I KNEW IT, I WAS FREE AND TUSSLIN' WITH **THOR** HIMSELF. AND YEAH, HE KNOCKED ME ON MY ASS A FEW TIMES."





"BUT EVENTUALLY I WON, DAMMIT. I CLEAN K.O.'D A GOD."



"YOU KNOW WHAT THAT FELT LIKE? CARL CREEL FROM THE BRONX, STANDING OVER THE GOD OF THUNDER?"



"I COULDN'T EXPLAIN IT IF I TRIED."

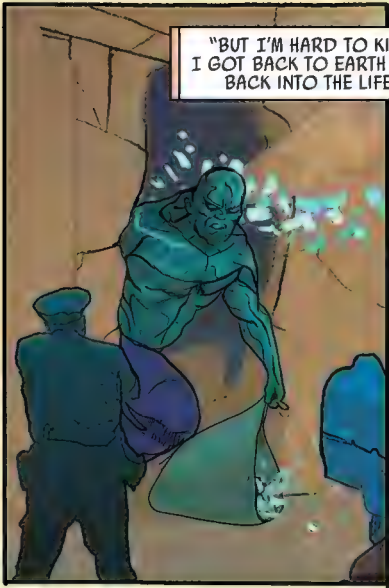


"BUT THOR? HE ALWAYS FOUND SOME SNEAKY BASTARD WAY OF COMING BACK. HE ONCE TRICKED ME INTO ABSORBING HELIUM AND FLOATING UP INTO SPACE."



"I WAS TRAPPED OUT THERE. TRAPPED IN THAT DEAD COLD FOR I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG."

"MISTER BIG NOBLE HERO LEFT ME TO DIE."



"BUT I'M HARD TO KILL. I GOT BACK TO EARTH AND BACK INTO THE LIFE."



"AND YEAH, I ROBBED SOME BANKS. SO THE HELL WHAT? SAME BANKS ROBBED MY AUNT BETSY. KINDERGARTEN TEACHER FOR 30 YEARS, AND SOME LITTLE TWERP ON WALL STREET GAMBLERD HER RETIREMENT AWAY."



"THERE'S DIRTIER WAYS TO PUT FOOD ON THE TABLE THAN ROBBIN' BANKS, WISHBONE, I'LL TELL YA THAT."



THEN AGAIN, YOU'RE A KING, RIGHT? YOU PROBABLY NEVER *HAD* TO PUT FOOD ON THE TABLE. PROBABLY ALWAYS HAD SOMEONE ELSE DOING IT FOR YOU.

YOU EVER EVEN COOKED YOURSELF A MEAL?

I... I HAVE NOT.

THEY GAVE US A COOKING CLASS IN THE JOINT ONCE. I DIDN'T LET ON THEN, BUT I KINDA LIKED IT. WHEN MY LADY GOT SICK, I HAD TO COOK FOR HER. WE EVER GET OUT OF HERE, YOU SHOULD LEARN. AT LEAST FRY YOURSELF AN EGG, FER CRYIN' OUT LOUD. TO SAY YOU DID IT, Y'KNOW?

"ANYHOW, I SPENT YEARS LIVING THAT LIFE--DOING JOBS FOR MANIACS IN MASKS, PUMMELIN' GUYS IN TIGHTS, GETTIN' PUMMELED BY GUYS IN TIGHTS.



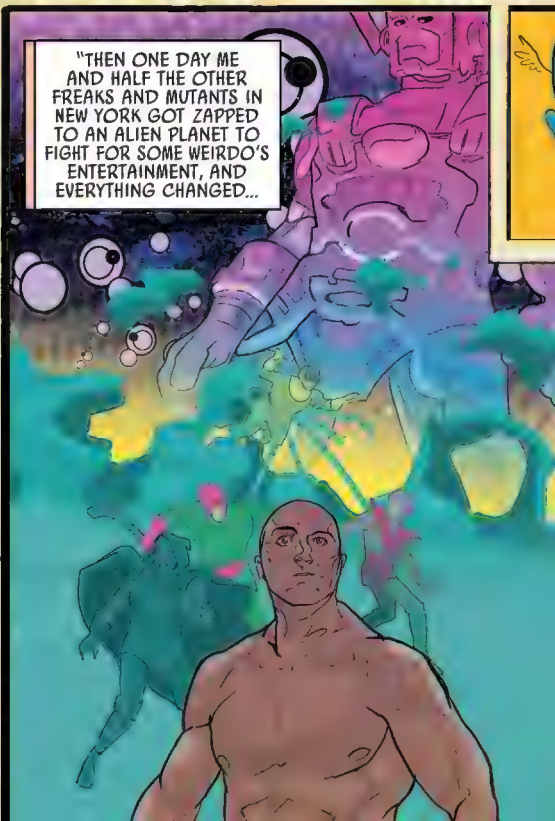
"IN AND OUT OF SUPER-PRISONS MORE TIMES THAN YOU CAN COUNT.



"I MADE A FEW BUDDIES WHO WERE ALL RIGHT. NOT EXACTLY WHAT YOU'D CALL 'GOOD INFLUENCES,' BUT GUYS YOU COULD TRUST NOT TO TURN RAT ON YA.



"THEN ONE DAY ME AND HALF THE OTHER FREAKS AND MUTANTS IN NEW YORK GOT ZAPPED TO AN ALIEN PLANET TO FIGHT FOR SOME WEIRDO'S ENTERTAINMENT, AND EVERYTHING CHANGED...



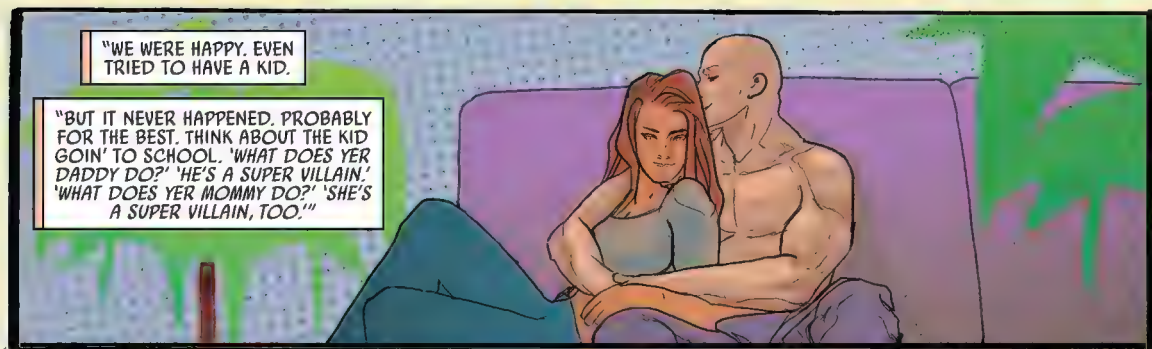




"...CUZ THAT'S WHEN I MET *MARY*. IF *YOU* CALLED HER *MARY*, OF COURSE, SHE MIGHT BREAK YER FACE. TO MOST PEOPLE SHE'S *TITANIA*."

"AW, YOU SHOULDA SEEN HER, WISHBONE. NEW TO TUSSLIN', BUT KNOCKIN' GOODY-GOODY BOZOS OUT LEFT AND RIGHT. THE MOMENT I SAW HER, I KNEW--THIS WAS THE KINDA DAME YOU MEET ONCE IN A LIFETIME."







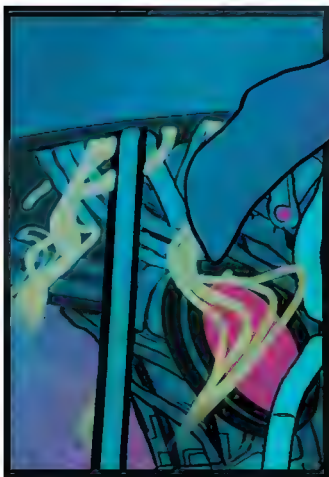


WHAT I'M SAYIN' IS, YOU GOTTA FORGIVE YOURSELF, YOU KNOW? YOU GOT NO OTHER CHOICE IF YOU WANNA GO ON LIVIN'.

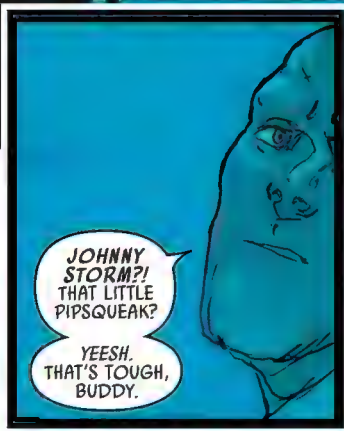
YER KID ~~COUGH~~ ARE YOU AND HIS MOM STILL TOGETHER?



**MEDUSA.**  
ONCE MY QUEEN, ALWAYS MY LOVE. WISER THAN I, KINDER THAN I, A GREATER RULER THAN I EVER WAS. WHAT I WOULD NOT GIVE TO SEE HER NOW. I, TOO, HAVE DONE TERRIBLE THINGS, CRUSHER CREEL. THINGS I NEVER SET RIGHT. THINGS SHE COULD NOT FORGIVE.



SHE FOUND ANOTHER. THE HUMAN TORCH.



**JOHNNY STORM?!**  
THAT LITTLE PIPSQUEAK?

YEESH. THAT'S TOUGH, BUDDY.



SHE SEEMED HAPPY. BUT THEN SHE CAME TO ME JUST BEFORE I WAS SNATCHED TO THIS PLACE, SPEAKING OF OLD LOVE AND NEW POSSIBILITY. MY LIFE SEEMED WORTH LIVING AGAIN.





CRUSHER  
CREEL?

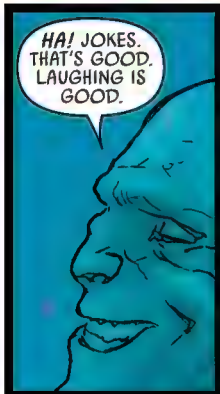
YEAH?

WHAT IS A  
"WISHBONE"?

HEH!  $\approx$ COUGH $\approx$  IT'D  
TAKE TOO LONG TO EXPLAIN.  
I WAS MESSIN' WITH YA, IS ALL.  
YA GOTTA ADMIT, THAT THING ON  
YER HEAD IS  $\approx$ COUGH $\approx$   
GOOFY-LOOKING.



THIS "THING"  
GIVES ME CONTROL  
OF MY POWERS. AND  
YOU ARE ONE TO TALK.  
YOUR OWN COSTUME  
CONSISTS OF NOT  
WEARING A  
SHIRT.



HA! JOKES.  
THAT'S GOOD.  
LAUGHING IS  
GOOD.



YOU KNOW, WHEN I  
WOKE UP HERE, I WAS WEARING  
THESE PURPLE PANTS. EVEN THOUGH  
 $\approx$ COUGH $\approx$  I HAVEN'T OWNED THESE  
PANTS IN YEARS. WEIRD,  
RIGHT?



CAN  
 $\approx$ COUGH $\approx$   
CAN I ASK YOU  
SOMETHING,  
WISHBONE?

YES,  
CRUSHER CREEL,  
YOU CAN ASK ME  
SOMETHING.



DOES IT  
GET ANNOYING?  
MUSICIANS  $\approx$ COUGH $\approx$   
COMIN' UP AND USIN' YER  
FOREHEAD TO TUNE THEIR  
INSTRUMENTS? "DING!  
B FLAT!" HEH.



AW, GO AHEAD AND LAUGH.  
YOU PROBABLY AIN'T LAUGHED  
A LOT IN YER LIFE, HAVE YA?  
NOW'S THE TIME,  
PAL.

HEY... I GOT  
 $\approx$ COUGH $\approx$  I GOT  
ONE: DID YOU HEAR THE  
JOKE ABOUT THE  
CIRCLE?

NO, I  
DID NOT.

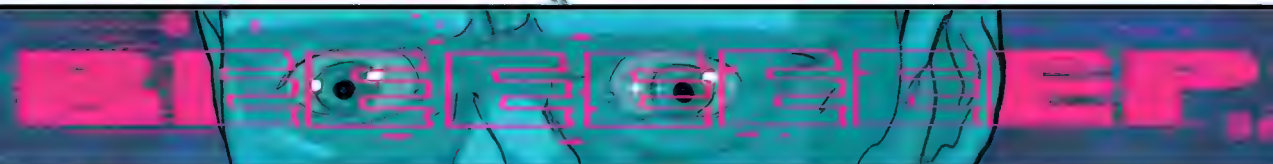
WELL, I'D  
TELL YA, BUT IT'S  
POINTLESS.

I DO  
NOT--



AH, YES! IT  
IS FUNNY BECAUSE  
A CIRCLE DOES NOT  
HAVE POINTS!

"POINTLESS!"  
IT'S A GOOFY JOKE,  
BUT I ONCE MADE A DEATH  
ROW MURDERER  
LAUGH BY--



WE'RE  
REALLY  
GONNA DIE,  
WISHBONE. WE'RE  
GONNA DIE WAY  
THE HELL OUT  
HERE. WE--  
HUH?





**LOCKJAW!**





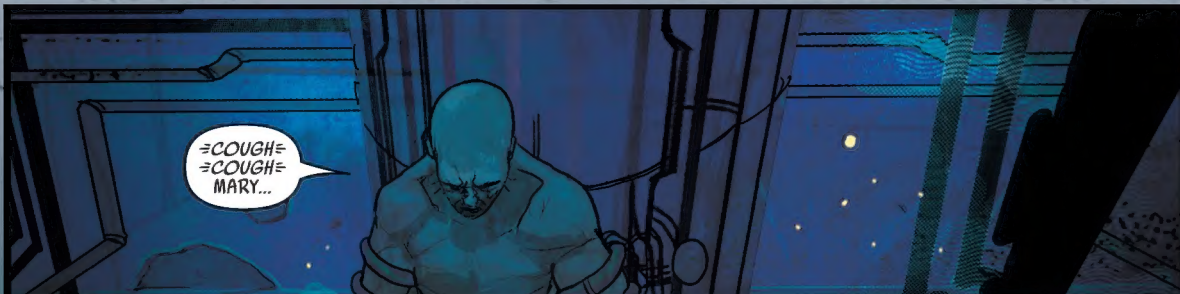
OLD  
FRIEND, I  
THOUGHT I WOULD  
NEVER SEE YOU  
AGAIN.



WISHBONE?  
WISHBONE? WHAT  
=COUGH= WHAT THE  
HELL'S HAPPENING?  
WE GETTIN' OUTTA  
HERE?



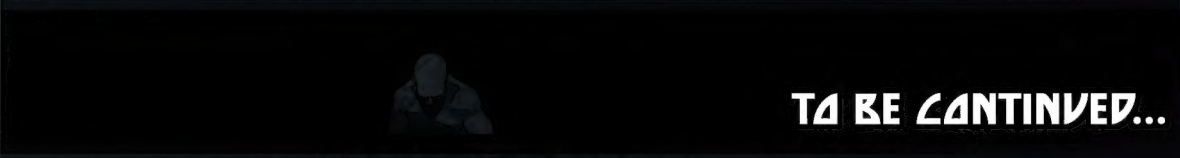
BLACK BOLT?  
**BLACK BOLT?** DON'T  
YOU LEAVE ME HERE,  
YOU BASTARD!



=COUGH=  
=COUGH=  
MARY...



=COUGH=  
=COUGH= MARY,  
I'M SORRY...



TO BE CONTINUED...





# SOUND OFF!



We want to hear from you! Send your emails to [mheroes@marvel.com](mailto:mheroes@marvel.com) and please mark them "OKAY TO PRINT."

Saved by the teleporting dog! It took him a little time, but Lockjaw's finally found his old master. But what about Crusher? Leave it to writer Saladin Ahmed to pull you in with a heartbreaker of a story—and then punch you in the gut. Wait'll you see what's in store next month.

In the meantime, your creative team, Saladin and Christian Ward, took a minute to answer a few of your many letters!

I am absolutely loving Black Bolt's first solo series. It blows my mind to experience Black Bolt's self-doubt and understanding of his own existence as the fallen king of the Inhumans. I'm just so used to his portrayal as a god among men. I have never found Black Bolt to be so relatable, even though I've always admired his character.

I would love to see Black Bolt's account of some Marvel's history. Like, maybe a deeper look into his perspective of the Illuminati immediately prior to SECRET WARS, or his experience in WORLD WAR HULK. What are some stories you would want to re-tell from Black Bolt's point of view?

Also, can we PLEASE get an issue dedicated to Lockjaw??? Pizza Dog had his own issue in HAWKEYE #11, but I would kill to see a serious story written from Lockjaw's perspective.

Sincerely,  
Alan Dela Cruz

**SALADIN:** Thank you so much for the kind words, Alan. Black Bolt will definitely be wrangling with some of the consequences of his actions in the larger Marvel Universe. And as for Lockjaw... well, I think you'll be pleased by what we've cooked up for issue #5!

**EDITOR'S P.S.** You want more Lockjaw, you got it! Check out Ryan North and Gustavo Duarte's back-up stories in **INHUMANS: ONCE AND FUTURE KINGS**—issue #1 is out now!

I just finished reading **BLACK BOLT #2** by Saladin Ahmed and Christian Ward. WOW. This issue totally sucked me in, and I was very disappointed when the issue ended. I need more! This comic reads like the best fantasy novels and has all the makings to leave the reader with the best book hangover EVER. I'm buying each issue as they come,

but this is going to be an excellent series to read in trade (which I will also buy).

Keep it up! Saladin and Christian are on to something spectacular.

Katie Reilly

**SALADIN:** Hi Katie, thank you so much for the support! My career as a fantasy writer is definitely an influence on me telling Black Bolt's story, so I'm very glad some of that is coming through! Thanks for writing!

Hey Saladin and Christian,

Black Bolt speaks! I'm not sure that's ever happened before without earth-shattering consequences. And Blackagar Boltagon speaks eloquently with quiet regality. I particularly like the way that Christian depicts Black Bolt as diminished in between Creel and Raava. Another high point was the shock that both of them threw their fights with Black Bolt, but best of all was Creel's tearful laughter at the similarity between BB's real and super hero names. Perfectly written and illustrated; this could be the start of great creative partnership.

A shout out (see what I did there?) to Nicholas Russell for his strong sense of design from the cover logo to the letters page. This is shaping up to be an entertaining, engaging read to match the beautifully psychedelic visuals.

Cheers,  
Bruce Marsh  
Newbury Park  
England

**CHRISTIAN:** Thanks, Bruce! You know, for all of the big cosmic action we have in **BLACK BOLT**, that moment of Crusher getting the giggles in issue #2 was my favorite to draw. Saladin has this brilliant way of bringing the humanity—it's one of the things that makes working with him an absolute joy. Hopefully this will be the first of many projects together.

I love that this series is deconstructing what it means to be a hero and what it means to sit in judgment. Bolt's interactions with Creel and Raava were spot-on in revealing that a large part (in comics and real life) of being a "hero" is ego and falsehood. "Mission accomplished" in-frikkin'-

deed. Been a while since I said "Make Mine Marvel!" but Saladin and crew deserve it. You've got me listening for the Silent King's whispers.

ZZ Claybourne  
Detroit, MI

**SALADIN:** Hi, ZZ! Black Bolt's heroic ego is definitely subjected to some brutal deconstruction in the prison. Part of what the Midnight King is going to need to figure out is how to be a hero when so much of what he's been taught about heroism has caused such destruction. It's a long process...

Before looking at this book, I had little to no interest in Black Bolt and the rest of the Inhumans, only having had passing exposure to them in titles like Hickman's **NEW AVENGERS** run. What captured my attention about this iteration of Black Bolt in particular was the character design by Christian Ward. It's the kind of simple but well-executed visual design that I think holds up to scrutiny no matter what angle or level of detail the character is portrayed in. The cover of issue #2, for example, was particularly striking. I look forward to reading the rest of the book and being introduced to Black Bolt through Ward's excellent visual style.

Zane Hayden,  
Manhattan KS

**CHRISTIAN:** High praise Zane, thank you! I'm glad you approve of Bolt's costume. I really wanted to homage Kirby's original and amazing design. His previous armor-led design by Steve McNiven was badass, but it felt right to remove that armor here and leave Bolt unprotected and vulnerable.

That's all the time we have this month, but keep telling us how much you love the Silent King! And if you like what's happening in this book, be sure to check out **INHUMANS: ONCE AND FUTURE KINGS #1**, where writer Christopher Priest and artist Phil Noto explore Black Bolt's tumultuous youth! (Yeah, we're plugging it twice in one letters page—it's that good!)



NEXT:  
**BLACK BOLT**  
#5



FOR MORE  
INHUMANS,  
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**ROYALS #6**



**INHUMANS: ONCE AND FUTURE**



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